



USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agriculture Information Network

Template Version 2.09

Voluntary Report - Public distribution

Date: 5/17/2007

GAIN Report Number: BR7623

Brazil

Biotechnology

Brazil Approves Commercialization of Biotech Corn 2007

Approved by:

Alan Hrapsky, Agricultural Counselor
U.S. Embassy

Prepared by:

Elizabeth Autry, Agricultural Attache and João F. Silva, Agricultural Specialist

Report Highlights:

After a nine-year wait, on May 17, the National Technical Commission of Biosafety (CTNBio) approved the commercialization of Bayer CropScience's "Liberty Link" corn. The decision will now be sent to the National Biosafety Council (CNBS), where it must receive approval by a majority of 11 ministers. "Liberty Link" corn is the first biotech product approved by CTNBio since the enactment of the new Biosafety Law of 2005.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Brasilia [BR1]
[BR]

The National Technical Commission of Biosafety (CTNBio) was initially established in 1995. However, under the Biosafety law 11,105, dated March 24, 2005, CTNBio was expanded from 18 to 27 members to include official representatives from the federal government, scientific and technical specialists from various fields of study. Imports of any agricultural commodity for animal feed or for further processing, or any ready-to-consume food products, and pet food containing biotech events must be pre-approved by CTNBio.

Although law number 11,105 created the National Biosafety Council (CNBS) to handle all political, social and economic factors that may influence regulatory decisions related to agricultural biotechnology, the expansion in the number of members that compose CTNBio created a major deadlock for approval of new biotech products in Brazil. Because of the two-thirds majority required under law 11,105/2005, no new biotech agriculture products had been approved since CTNBio became operational in November of 2006, as members with no technical background on biotech, but who represent anti-biotech groups, used administrative maneuvers to block decisions. This led to a backlog of over 500 new product requests. After much debate, President Lula signed on March 21, 2007, Law Number 11,460, which altered provisions of Biotech Law Number 11,105. The main change was the reduction to a simple majority of the number of votes needed to approve individual biotech events by CTNBio.

On May 17, CTNBio approved the commercialization of Bayer CropScience's "Liberty Link" corn, stating that it does not present a threat to human, animal or environmental health. The decision will now be sent to the CNBS, where it must receive approval by a majority of 11 ministers.

"Liberty Link" corn (herbicide tolerant – ammonium-glyphosate tolerant) is the first biotech product approved by CTNBio since the enactment of the Biosafety Law of 2005 and only the third ever approved for commercialization in Brazil (after "Roundup Ready" soybeans and "Bollgard" cotton). It has been awaiting approval for nine years.